

solve to try to attend the meetings of this year. Many subjects of importance in relation to both scientific and organized medicine will be up for consideration. Those who attend annual session meetings always feel they profit, not only from hearing papers and discussions, but also from the pleasant contacts made with colleagues from all parts of the State. The meetings, too, are of value to all members, no matter how long they have been in practice or what is the period of their California Medical Association membership, and a cordial invitation is extended to every member to attend. Try, therefore, to be among those who will answer "Present" at Coronado on May 25-28.

#### EXPERT MEDICAL TESTIMONY: A RECENT LEGAL ENCOUNTER

**Claims of a Los Angeles Attorney.**—In December last, a member of the Los Angeles County Medical Association was served with a court subpoena to appear with certain records and give a deposition on his professional findings concerning a patient who had been under his observation. He learned that the attorney for the plaintiff intended to demand expert testimony, without giving him the fee for such testimony; client and lawyer contending that, under Section 2021 of the Civil Code of California, a new code provision passed by the last legislature, the physician was so obligated. Upon the advice of his personal attorney, he stated his objections to being questioned; but in order to avoid the delays incident to a citation for contempt of court, he gave his testimony on the questions submitted, all subject, however, to his objections thereto.

When our attention was called to the matter, we wrote to the general counsel of the Association, Mr. Hartley Peart, and his letter of reply may be found on page 136 of this issue.

Mention is here made of the affair lest further demands of this nature be presented to members of the Association. All that is needed to bring such "demanding attorneys" to their senses is the willingness of one of the physicians so cited to refuse to answer on matters of opinion and permit himself to be haled before a superior court on the charge of contempt; after which the matter can be threshed out and settled.

Between attorneys-at-law in the legislature, who elaborate confusing statutes, and others in private practice, who seek to add more confusion, ordinary citizens are certainly, at times, submitted to much inconvenience in combating such nuisances.

#### ON SOME ARTICLES AND ITEMS IN THE CURRENT NUMBER

**Every Issue Contains Some Articles of Special Interest.**—In each number of the official Journal an effort is made to present a composite of the California Medical Association's scientific and organization activities in the hope that every reader may find something to his special liking or needs. When, occasionally, attention is called to

certain articles, it is not so much because of supposedly superior scientific or literary merit, but rather that the articles mentioned, on account of other reasons existing at the time, may be of immediate or general interest and importance. Thus, in the current issue, mention may be made of the items listed below:

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#### Infection of Two Laboratory Workers in California with Psittacosis and Tularemia.

From time to time, reports of cases of infection of laboratory workers find places in the literature,\* and to these may be added two case reports in this issue; one of psittacosis and the other of tularemia, well worthy of perusal. It is gratifying to know that both patients went on to good recovery in spite of the severe illness each experienced. In this connection, also, may be noted the unfortunate experience of Dr. H. E. Hasseltine of the United States Public Health Service, who contracted psittacosis in the recent work of dismantling the Pasadena laboratory of the State Board of Health; but who, likewise, after a critical sickness, happily recovered.

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#### "Baking Soda-Sodium Fluorid" Poisonings in San Francisco.

A few weeks ago the lay press contained, day after day, accounts of the illness and deaths resulting from the use of what was supposed to be poisoned baking soda, but which later was shown to be baking soda contaminated by sodium fluorid. After immediate and exhaustive investigation by the Director of Public Health of the City and County of San Francisco, the conditions under which this accident occurred were laid bare. The two articles, one entitled "Poisoning Due to the Ingestion of a Mixture of Sodium Bicarbonate-Sodium Fluorid," by Dr. J. C. Geiger, and the other captioned "Acute Fluorin Poisoning," by Dr. Jesse L. Carr, commenting on the need of more efficient statutory regulations of salvaged goods, make interesting reading. It is, therefore, to be hoped that both State and local regulations, adequate to prevent a recurrence of such accidents, will be enacted in the near future.

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#### Conference of County Society Secretaries.

On Saturday, January 18, the secretaries of the component county societies were the official guests of the California Medical Association in an all-day meeting held in San Francisco. The program was printed in last month's issue (page 52), and Association Secretary Warnshuis will no doubt present further information thereon. The officers of the State Association felt that this conference, in its initial meeting, had more than justified itself; a sentiment heartily concurred in by the representatives of the county societies who were present.

It is generally agreed that the administrative officer of a county society who carries most of

\* See October, 1935, CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, page 260 (Doctor Hasseltine); and January, 1936, issue, page 64 (the late Miss Fabst).

its burdens is the secretary. If the county secretary is familiar with the organization work of the State Association, he can become a powerful factor in creating additional and harmonious effort for the attainment of the policies to which the parent organization is pledged. At San Francisco, on Saturday morning, the State Association officers presented outlines of their work and problems. In the afternoon, round-table discussions were had of the work of the Association and its component societies. Many of these secretaries will be among the delegates at the next annual session, and this preliminary conference will make for better understanding of the numerous subjects which will be presented to the House of Delegates at Coronado.

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**California Medical Association Council Meeting of January 19.**—The Council put in an entire day discussing items on an extensive docket and even then found it difficult adequately to consider all the problems submitted. The complete minutes are printed in this issue.†

One of the important matters was the report of the Judicial Council of the American Medical Association on the appeal of two members of the Los Angeles County Medical Association who, some time ago, were expelled by that unit. An inspection of the blackface subheadings of the other items of business will reveal decisions taken on other problems facing the Association. Members are urged to read the minutes, recollecting that the references to subjects are much condensed when written up as minutes. Local councilors and the Association Secretary will be happy to give additional information to members who desire further knowledge on any topics.

#### STATE ASSOCIATION DELEGATES: HOW ONE LARGE SOCIETY SELECTS ITS DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

**House of Delegates the Association's Supreme Body: Its Important Work.**—The increasing importance of the medical-economic problems which, at each year's annual session come before the House of Delegates, makes it more than ever apparent that the election of delegates and alternates should not be a haphazard function, but rather a duty to be looked upon as one of the serious responsibilities of a component county society, and so to be construed by all members. The offices of delegates and alternates should not be regarded as positions of little moment, to be given as transient expressions of courtesy to one member this year, and to another the next. On the contrary, a county unit's members, prior to electing their delegates and alternates should ask themselves: Who, among our number, can best represent the points of view of our society on the business problems of the State Association and its component county units, and who, among us, may be of greatest coöperative service with other

delegates in acting on policies vital to the further development of both our Association and scientific and organized medicine?

In smaller societies the overemphasizing of personal regard or other affiliations may, at times, lead to danger and prove not always to result in the best of possible selections. In larger organizations with hundreds of members—many of whom, month in and month out, pay only nominal attention to the general problems of their organization—the task of selection is also no easy matter.

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**How the Los Angeles County Medical Association Has Solved This Problem.**—The Los Angeles County Medical Association has more than 2,200 members and is entitled, therefore, on the basis of one delegate for every fifty members, to forty-one delegates. Its task is to determine who shall be its forty-one delegates and alternates.

In 1933, the Board of Councilors of that society solved its problem, not through the appointment of a nominating committee, nor even by open-floor nominations, but by a plan of impersonal selection of nominees from a list of state and county officers, who, as such, are familiar with the problems of organized medicine; additional nominations from the floor also being in order. Ballots are previously prepared, containing the list of state and county officers, and with blanks for additional names. The election, therefore, takes but little time; the tellers collecting the ballots and submitting their report before the end of the meeting. The plan is mentioned for its obvious advantages, and because it may have a suggestive value to other county societies wishing to adopt, by resolution, a similar or modified plan as their own future method of procedure. The ballot sheets give the names of holdover delegates so that these are not voted upon. The full number of delegates to which the society is entitled, is voted for; the highest half so elected to act as delegates for two years, the succeeding half to act as alternates. Some of the county societies, even though they have elected their delegates for this year's session, may at this time wish to consider the plan, and then adopt it, or a modification, for use during the next and succeeding years.

From the introductory sheet of the recent Los Angeles ballot the following explanatory excerpts are taken:

Vote for forty-one (41), the twenty (20) highest to be declared elected delegates for 1936 and 1937, the next twenty-one (21) to be declared elected alternates for 1936 and 1937.

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The attached ballot, with nominees for delegates and alternates, was prepared in conformity with Minute No. 687, proceedings of the Board of Councilors, January 8, 1933, which provides that nominees be selected from the following groups:

1. All members of the Los Angeles County Medical Association who are members of any of the California Medical Association committees.
2. All members of the Board of Councilors not already elected to the House of Delegates.
3. All committee chairmen of the Los Angeles County Medical Association not already elected delegates.

† See page 120.